

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A voting method comprising:
 - a. interconnecting at least one precinct voting terminal having data entry and voice activation software with a plurality of automated touchtone telephone devices having microphones, receivers, transmitters and receivers, and entry keypads via a secure virtual private network,
 - b. registering voters in accordance with election laws with a voter registration number and their name and inputting a database which stores information on each voter in a remote central receiving and processing terminal wherein voter transactions are entered and recorded,
 - c. creating an audio ballot suitable for transmission over a telephone, and inputting a database which stores the audio ballot and instructions required in each respective precinct computer terminal,
 - d. forming a secure communication link between the precinct voting computer terminal and the central receiving and processing terminal to transmit voting transaction election results,
 - e. assigning voters a voter access number to use with their voter registration number,
 - f. qualifying and allowing voters to vote on the voter touchtone telephones after they enter their registration number and voter access number,
 - g. talking the voter through the ballot and recording each voter's keypad or audio responses made on the touchtone telephone in the precinct voting terminal database,

h. computer tabulating all voter's choices in response to the audio ballot in the precinct voting terminal, and

i. transmitting the tabulated voter choices to the remote central receiving and processing terminal for certification.

2. A voting method according to Claim 1, including hand tabulating the votes of hearing impaired voters, and inputting their votes into the precinct voting computer terminal database.

3. A voting method according to Claim 1, including randomly assigning the order of the electronic ballot choices.

4. A voting method according to Claim 1, including providing the voter a slip of paper that has his registration number and voter access number.

5. A voting method according to Claim 1, including continually forwarding the ballot information from the precinct voting terminals data base to the remote central receiving and processing terminal.

6. A voting method according to Claim 1, including summarizing the voter's choices for final review by the voter before the electronic ballot is included in the precinct voting computer terminal database.

7. A voting method according to Claim 1, including cross checking the precinct voter data base by the remote central receiving and processing terminal to find any incorrect information such as duplicates in the system, incorrect voter information, change of address, or name.

8. A voting method according to Claim 1, including sending registered voters an information post card with a toll free number to enable them to call and check their voter information and obtain information about up coming elections.

9. A voting apparatus comprising:

a. at least one precinct voting computer terminal having data entry and voice activation software,

b. a plurality of automated touchtone telephone devices having microphones, receivers, transmitters and receivers, and entry keypads with compatible voter software connected to the precinct voting terminal via a virtual private network,

c. a remote central receiving and processing terminal in communication with the precinct voting terminals,

d. election voting qualification software inputted into the remote central receiving and processing terminal, which screens registering voters in accordance with election laws, and generates voter registration numbers, voter access numbers, and name lists,

e. a database inputted into the remote receiving and processing terminal containing registration number and name list information on each voter in each respective precinct,

f. audio ballot questionnaire and voter tabulation software inputted into the precinct voting terminals for eliciting and counting voter ballot choices entered via the automated touchtone telephone devices,

g. a database containing approved audio ballot and instructions inputted into each respective precinct voting terminal for transmission over the touchtone telephone devices to elicit voter choices,

h. a database tabulation of voter choices generated by the voter tabulation software made after each voter enters their registration number and voter access number inputted

i. a secure communication link between the precinct voting computer terminal and the central receiving and processing terminal to transmit the tabulated voter choices for certification, and

j. a power source associated with the virtual private network to power the computer terminals, telephone devices, and related equipment.

10. A voting apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein the precinct voting computer terminal voting tabulations include hand tabulated votes of hearing impaired voters.

11. A voting apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein the precinct voting computer terminal randomly assigning the order of the electronic ballot choices.

12. A voting apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein the voter is provided with a slip of paper having his registration number and voter access number.

13. A voting apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein the precinct voting terminals continually forward the ballot tabulations to the remote central receiving and processing terminal.

14. A voting apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein the touchtone telephones are programmed to summarize the voter's choices for final review by the

voter before the electronic ballot is included in the precinct voting computer terminal database.

15. A voting apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein the remote central receiving and processing terminal software cross checks the precinct voter data base to find any incorrect information such as duplicates in the system, incorrect voter information, change of address, or name.

16. A voting apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein the remote central receiving and processing terminal generates and sends registered voters an information post card with a toll free number to enable them to call and check their voter information and obtain information about up coming elections.

17. A voting apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein the audible voting ballot contains survey questions eliciting voter opinions concerning products and services.